

# WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,  
and workers in the District of Columbia*

*Friday, July 4, 2003*

## MPDC JOINS TASK FORCE INVESTIGATING ARSON FIRES IN DC AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

The MPDC this week joined a task force that is investigating possible connections among more than two dozen suspicious arson or possible arson fires that occurred over the past several weeks in DC and Prince George's County, Maryland. The task force consists of the DC Fire and EMS Department, Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, Baltimore and Washington Field Divisions of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the MPDC. The task force is focusing on possible connections among any or all of the suspicious fires. On Wednesday, the MPDC issued a sketch of a possible crucial witness to a suspicious June 30 fire at 2505 Randolph Street, NE. The witness, who was riding a bicycle at the time, is described as a black male, possibly in his 30s, 5'9" tall, medium build with a dark complexion; he was last seen wearing a dark blue baseball cap, a burgundy-colored tee-shirt and dark-colored pants. Anyone with information about this witness, or any of the suspicious arson fires, is asked to call the MPDC at (202) 727-9099 or the task force's arson hotline, (301) 77-ARSON.

Chief Ramsey has announced that the MPDC is contributing \$5,000 to the reward fund for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the suspected arson fires in the District.

- ① To read more about the crucial witness and to view a composite sketch, go to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2181>
- ① As of July 3, the total reward fund for information in the cases in the region totaled \$6,500. Details at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2175>
- ① The MPDC and DC Fire/EMS have released a list of the 13 suspicious fires being investigated in DC:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2182>
- ① Stay up-to-date on the task force's investigation through the PG Fire/EMS website at:  
<http://www.co.pg.md.us/Government/PublicSafety/Fire/arson.asp?h=20&s=&n=130>
- ① For arson prevention ideas, visit the InterFire Online Resource Center at:  
[http://www.interfire.org/res\\_file/menu\\_bf.asp](http://www.interfire.org/res_file/menu_bf.asp)

## MPDC CAREER EXPO NETS MORE THAN 550 APPLICANTS

The MPDC is looking for more than a few good men and women to join its ranks. And during its Fourth Annual Police Career Expo on Saturday, June 28, the Department took a major step toward reaching its recruiting goals. A total of 557 would-be police officers began the application process and took the written during the day-long expo at the new Washington Convention Center, and several dozen more individuals filled out applications and scheduled tests for later dates. That's approximately three times the number of applicants at the 2002 Career Expo. The MPDC hopes to attract a minimum of 1,200 qualified applicants—both entry level and lateral hires—over the next year. The Department may need to hire as many as 500 officers, in order to keep pace with attrition and build up to its goal of 3,800 officers by September 2004. There are currently about 3,640 officers on the force. The Career Expo was the kickoff event of the MPDC's recruiting season. Other events throughout the year will include visits to military installations, community colleges and high schools, and various conferences and seminars targeting minorities and women, among others. Next November, the MPDC will make a return trip to Puerto Rico to conduct on-site testing for bilingual officers.

- ① For details on how to become an MPDC officer, call the Recruiting Unit at (202) 727-2767, or start the application process online at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/employ/officer.shtml>
- ① Individuals who want to "join" the MPDC, but keep their regular day jobs, may consider volunteering as a Reserve officer. Details at:  
[http://mpdc.dc.gov/serv/programs/services\\_PRC.shtml](http://mpdc.dc.gov/serv/programs/services_PRC.shtml)

## MPDC MEETS ITS GOAL OF HIRING 58 NEW CALL-TAKERS

The MPDC this week met its goal of hiring 58 new civilian call-takers for the agency's Public Safety Communications Center, which answers all 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 calls in DC. The new call-takers were all hired by the Department's July 1 deadline. They are now in training before assuming their duties on the PSCC operational floor. Once the 58 new hires complete their training, the MPDC will be at its full staffing of 98 civilian call-takers, as recommended in a study by independent experts with the Institute for Law and Justice. Over the past few years, the Department has temporarily detailed sworn officers on limited-duty status to staff call-taking positions. Now, the Department will be able to fully staff its 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 call-taking functions with dedicated, trained civilian professionals. Although it is now fully staffed, the MPDC is still accepting applications for Police Communications Operators so that there is a pool of qualified applicants to quickly fill any future vacancies.

## DETECTIVES WHO TRACKED DOWN SUSPECT IN SHOOTING OF A FELLOW OFFICER ARE HONORED AT MONTHLY "CHAMPS" AWARDS CEREMONY

Last March, Det. Anthony McGee confronted a suspect involved in illicit activity. The suspect began to flee, producing a handgun and firing at the detective. Det. McGee was struck three times in the right leg, and the suspect managed to evade apprehension...for the time being. A team of detectives, dedicated to capturing the suspect, joined forces to investigate the crime. When a wireless telephone was recovered at the crime scene, Det. Kevin Tighe, the lead investigator, used the phone to eventually track down its owner. He agreed to be interviewed about the shooting—an interrogation that led detectives to believe the man was being deceitful. Detectives persisted, and eventually the subject provided a statement implicating himself in the case and he was placed under arrest. Detectives then prepared a search warrant for the suspect's residence, which revealed numerous items of evidentiary value, including clothing and a .380-caliber weapon that matched the weapon used to shoot Det. McGee. The almost air-tight case was presented to the US Attorney's Office, but prior to indictment, the defendant decided to plead guilty. For their diligent efforts in arresting and convicting a dangerous felon who had brazenly shot one of their own, eight detectives were recognized at the July CHAMPS Awards ceremony. Det. Tighe was honored as the Departmentwide "Officer of the Month." In all, the MPDC recognized 21 of its members during the awards ceremony, held July 3 at the Washington Plaza Hotel in Northwest.

## NEWS & NOTES

**Drug Free Zones.** Drug free zones are in effect this weekend in PSAs 605 and 608 in Southeast DC. Drug free zones are planned for other police districts next weekend. Details on the Anti-Loitering/Drug Free Zone law are at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/comm/drugfreezone.shtm>.

**Summer Curfew Hours.** The MPDC reminds young people and their parents that during July and August, DC's curfew hours are from 12:01 am to 6 am, seven nights a week. Get all the details on DC's curfew law and the MPDC's enforcement strategy at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/curfew.shtm>

**Secure the Call.** This innovative program provides emergency cell phones to community policing groups and residents throughout the DC area. Donate your old cell phone, which is cleaned and reprogrammed to dial 9-1-1 and 3-1-1, by dropping it off at any MPDC district station or substation. Citizen patrol and Neighborhood Watch volunteers, as well as other individuals interested in obtaining a free emergency cell phone should contact the MPDC's Community Outreach Section at (202) 727-0783. Details at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/comm/stc.shtm>.

① Details on these positions, including job requirements and salary, can be found at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/employ/civilian.shtm>

① For more information on the PSCC, as well as the 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 systems in DC, go to: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/phone/phone.shtm>

① Read about the heroic actions of all of this month's CHAMPS awardees at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/heroes/champs/2003/07.shtm>

### DATA BOX

Homicides (as of 7/3/03)

- 2003: 123
- 2002: 113
- % Change: +8.8%

Arrests (week ending 6/28/03)

- Total: 805
- Drugs: 130
- Motor Vehicle Theft: 20
- Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 30

Firearm Recoveries (as of 7/1/03)

- Total: 976
- June: 162

Traffic Fatalities (as of 7/3/03)

- 2003: 29
- 2002: 33
- % Change: -12.1%